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LETTER DATED 15 FEBRUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JORDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

With reference to the request submitted by a number of delegations in the latter part of last month, which my delegation supported, for the holding of a formal meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation in the Gulf, and in view of the Council's decision on 13 February 1991 to hold a closed meeting, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement that I would have delivered in the Council if the meeting had been public.

I should be grateful if you would kindly have this letter and the text of the attached statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdullah SALAH
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement of H.E. Mr. Abdullah Salah, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, before the Security Council, concerning the situation in the Gulf

Mr. President,

As this is the first time that I am taking the floor this year, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate your country on its membership of the Council. I also wish to offer you my personal congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the present month. I am confident that your experience and wisdom will help the Council to discharge its tasks in the most efficient manner under these difficult circumstances.

I also wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, the Permanent Representative of Zaire, for his capable direction of the Council's work last month.

Mr. President,

The Security Council is meeting today at a time when the momentous and devastating war that is being waged in the Middle East has entered its fourth week; a war which my country diligently endeavoured to avert, while warning of its disastrous consequences and repercussions not only for our region but for the entire world. Unfortunately, our endeavours were unsuccessful, since they were obstructed by a number of parties, and other peaceful initiatives that were made also failed for the same reason. While today expressing our anxiety concerning the outbreak of this war in the Gulf, which is a vital and sensitive region of the world, we also wish to express our regret that the Security Council failed to hold an early meeting immediately after the outbreak of this war in order to consider the action that is being undertaken, in its name, by a number of States, with a view to ascertaining whether those military operations have transcended the framework of its resolutions and whether there is still scope for an attempt to solve the problem peacefully. It was only natural that we should expect this from the Security Council in its capacity as the body that was established as an effective instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe that the most appropriate way to achieve that objective is to prevent the occurrence of wars and make every endeavour to avert them, instead of granting an open licence to wage them.

Mr. President,

My country's position in regard to the Gulf crisis is clear and based on principle. We oppose the seizure of territory by force and we do not recognize the political and demographic changes resulting therefrom. We also believe in the peaceful settlement of conflicts and we regard peaceful, calm and constructive dialogue based on equality and mutual respect as the only appropriate method to settle disputes between States.

We were deeply grieved when the crisis erupted between two Arab countries on 2 August 1990 and His Majesty King Hussein made sincere and diligent endeavours to rapidly contain and overcome that crisis on the basis of international law, within the Arab context, which is the natural context for such endeavours. Although those endeavours almost achieved their aim, certain parties in and outside the region sought to expand the scope of that crisis by internationalizing it. The forceful intervention of external parties in that crisis, as well as the stubborn opposition to dialogue, the massive deployment of foreign forces in the Gulf region, the launching of organized and hostile information campaigns and the hasty adoption of resolutions, led to a dangerous escalation of that crisis by neutralizing the parties that could have acted as mediators and numerous opportunities for peace were therefore lost.

Mr. President,

Our position on the Gulf crisis is in keeping with the views of the international community and our aim is to ensure the triumph of international law. However, we differ from some in regard to the means for the achievement of that aim. We have chosen to emphasize the preferability of a peaceful solution and we have stressed the need to make every possible effort to that end, with an open mind and in such a way as to take into account the background and interrelated aspects of the problem. In that regard, we feared the outbreak of a devastating war, the adverse consequences of which would outweigh its positive results, assuming that war can have any positive results. War is the worst option to which a party to a dispute can resort and it should not be regarded as a means to achieve a solution until all other means have been exhausted.

At the present time, now that the war has become a fait accompli, and considering the tremendous human suffering and large-scale devastation that it has caused, we feel impelled to make a strong appeal for the cessation of all the military operations in the Gulf region and for the parties concerned to return to the negotiating table, in order to avoid further human and material losses.

The United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to make every effort to maintain peace. Consequently, in accordance with the responsibilities vested in it under the Charter, the Security Council has an obligation to continue its endeavours to reach a peaceful solution to this conflict and also to solve the other outstanding problems in this vital region of the world, particularly the question of Palestine, the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is still awaiting a solution in accordance with international law. We fear that Israel might exploit the international preoccupation with the ongoing war in the Gulf in order to implement its well-known expansionist schemes and expel the Palestinian population from the occupied territories.

Mr. President,

Any objective observer following the military operations that are being undertaken by the allied forces, under the leadership of the United States, against Iraq would inevitably reach the conclusion that the purpose of this large-scale and

massive onslaught is not solely to liberate Kuwait, but also to destroy Iraq as a military and economic Power. The devastation has extended to places of worship, schools, hospitals, residential areas, roads, bridges, electric power stations, water-supply networks and even a factory for the manufacture of infant formula. Large numbers of civilians, including women, children and elderly persons, have been killed or wounded in Iraq as a result of this widespread destruction. By now, the world should realize the dangerous and tragic nature of the situation following the bombardment by allied aircraft of a civilian shelter in which about 500 persons died. All this prompts us and others to wonder whether these military operations have not, in fact, transcended the aims of the Security Council resolutions.

It is also a source of concern and apprehension that some of the principal foreign parties participating in this campaign have begun to speak of restructuring the situation in the region, through the creation of military alliances and the establishment of a regional order, in a way that would serve their own ends but which would not be conducive to the interests and aspirations of the peoples of the region.

Mr. President,

The recent international developments, culminating in the announcement of the termination of the cold war, gave mankind cause to hope for a better world in which mutual understanding and respect would prevail and in which the United Nations would play its role in the establishment and maintenance of peace. However, the outbreak of the Gulf crisis diminished that hope. We could have solved this problem in a peaceful and equitable manner, thereby setting an example to be followed under the so-called "new international order". However, in view of the deteriorating situation, we cannot but wonder about the nature of that new order in the name of which this war is being waged, with the destruction of Iraq as its primary "achievement", and also about the role of the United Nations in that order, given the fact that the Organization has been used to give this war the stamp of approval and to vest it with the cloak of international legitimacy, after which the Organization was expected to take a back seat and merely observe the acts that were being committed, in its name, as though the matter no longer concerned it.

Kuwait's resumption of its former status as a sovereign Member State of the United Nations cannot be achieved by destroying Iraq, which is also a Member State of this Organization, or by breaking its sovereign will and imposing hegemony on it. Our fears for Iraq and our commitment to the defence of its interests are as strong as our fears for Kuwait and our commitment to the defence of Kuwait's interests, since both are sister Arab countries with which we have links that are firmer and closer than any temporal interests. We must ask ourselves: In what situation will Iraq find itself if this war continues? In what situation will Kuwait find itself? Will this lead to the re-establishment of peace and security in the region, as indicated in Security Council resolution 678 (1990)? We have doubts in this regard. Moreover, we do not agree with the interpretation of the expression "use all necessary means", as contained in that resolution, as implying the use of force, to the exclusion of other means, on a historically unprecedented scale within 24 hours after the expiration of the deadline set by the Security Council for Iraq's withdrawal. Furthermore, the use of force, if indispensable,

does not imply that it should continue to the bitter end without pausing to give peace a chance. Should the interpretation of the expression "use all necessary means" be left to the generals in the field?

Mr. President,

Since human ingenuity has succeeded in manufacturing all these lethal weapons, should it not also be capable of finding a means, other than war, to solve a problem such as the occupation of Kuwait? If one State has used force to settle its dispute with another State, can this justify the use of the same means by a large number of States acting in association with each other? Although one State might be incapable of solving a particular problem without using force, the collective wisdom of the international community should certainly be capable of dealing with the problem in a different manner. If the time and efforts that were spent on establishing the coalition in the Gulf and on the preparations for the war had been devoted to the quest for a peaceful solution, this war would have been averted. We do not believe that a real peaceful endeavour was made in a manner commensurate with the capabilities of the principal parties to the alliance or with the seriousness of the problem. Moreover, when the problem became a matter of daily concern to the Security Council, the latter merely adopted one resolution after another, leaving States to embark on their own individual peaceful initiatives. The Council did not even request the Secretary-General to use his good offices and make diplomatic endeavours to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Mr. President,

At the present time, we feel obliged to warn, once again, of the dangers inherent in the continuation of this war, from the standpoint not only of the large numbers of human victims and the tremendous material destruction that would be caused in Iraq and Kuwait, but also of the probability of an extension of the scope of this war to include other parties in the region, or the probability of the use of non-conventional weapons, with all the devastating consequences that this would have for the future of the region as a whole, and possibly for the whole world. Has the time not come to halt this destructive war, to allow the voice of reason to prevail over the sound of bombs, and to provide scope for quiet diplomacy and constructive dialogue with a view to reaching the desired peaceful and equitable settlement?

I wish to conclude my statement by quoting a passage from the address delivered by His Majesty King Hussein on 6 February 1991, in which he said: "There are still opportunities for peace and the seizure of these opportunities would be less costly and more genuinely indicative of a commitment to values and principles than a continuation of this devastating war".

Thank you, Mr. President.